

JUL 24 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 81, No. 7 July/August 1999

## GGAS Celebrates Its Volunteers

On May 15, GGAS held an appreciation picnic for its many volunteers. Over 40 volunteers showed up at our recently completed wetland restoration project at Arrowhead Marsh in San Leandro Bay, Oakland, to enjoy themselves and to let the GGAS Board show its appreciation.

We had great weather, great food (prepared by GGAS member William Giddens and his Jasper's Catering Company) and a great time.

And, we saw an amazing number of birds for a mid-May date. We saw Whimbrels, 5 Red Knots, Dunlin and Dowitchers, California Least Terns swooping over our restored seasonal wetlands, Avocets, Black-necked Stilts (including many Avocet chicks and a

probable Stilt chick), two Stilts on a nest, Gadwall, Common Goldeneye, Shovelers, Pintail and many other birds. Yes, our restoration wetland is truly loved by birds, as is only appropriate.

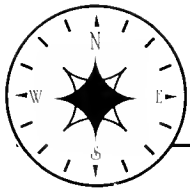
Without our volunteers GGAS would not exist. It is the volunteers that lead our field trips, our volunteers in our Conservation Committee, our Education Committee, our Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge Committee and our GGAS Board that make GGAS a thriving and active organization.

And these folks are doing all of this work because it is fun and satisfying. After all it's volunteer work and it must be rewarding. These 40-plus volunteers who joined us on our volunteer appreciation picnic day represent only a small part of our extensive volunteer group.

But we are always looking for help. We can always use new field trip leaders. There are never enough people helping us with our Conservation work. New docents for our education efforts are always appreciated and are much needed. Join us and have a truly rewarding experience with a bunch of wonderful and interesting folk. We look forward to seeing you at our next volunteer appreciation day event!



*A few of the volunteers who enjoyed our May 15 celebration at Arrowhead Marsh.*



# Field Trips Calendar

**G**AS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

## **SUNDAY JULY 4, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

See June Gull for details.  
Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

## **SATURDAY, JULY 10, PRESIDIO BIRDS.**

See June Gull for details. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229. E-mail: harry\_fuller@zd.com.

## **SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 24-25, YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY.**

See June Gull for details of this by reservation only trip for GGAS members. Leader: George Peyton (510) 444-3131 weekdays. \$ (\*).

## **SUNDAY AUGUST 1, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

## **FRIDAY - MONDAY, AUGUST 6-9, BACKPACKING TRIP IN LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.**

See June Gull for details of this by reservation only trip for GGAS members. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details contact David Rice at (510) 527-7210 or drice@jps.net. \$ (\*)

## **SATURDAY AUGUST 7, HAYWARD SHORELINE.**

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, 4901 Breakwater Avenue, for this half-day trip. Shorebirds are returning in large numbers and there are few Bay Area shorebird locations better than Hayward Shoreline. Depending upon the species, we should see some first fall birds in their once-in-a-lifetime bright juvenal plumage, as well as adults still in breeding plumage or in various stages of molt. Directions: from Oakland, take I-880 south to Hwy. 92 (Hayward/San Mateo Bridge exit). Go west towards San Mateo. Exit Hwy. 92 at Clawiter, cross Clawiter onto Breakwater Ct., and turn left onto Breakwater Avenue. The Interpretive Center (opens at 10:00, no other facilities) is at the end of the road. Beginners welcome. Leader: Lewis Cooper (510) 526-1773.

## **SUNDAY AUGUST 29, TILDEN REGIONAL PARK, BERKELEY.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot for this half-day trip. Enter the park from either Canyon Drive (where Spruce meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.) or Shasta Rd., off Grizzly Peak Blvd. in Berkeley and follow the signs to the Nature Center at the north end

of the park. We will explore Jewel Lake and other areas. Tilden should be alive with migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers as well as resident birds. Beginners welcome. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936. E-mail: Rscalf@jps.net

## **SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4, LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS, MARIN.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot for this half-day trip. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left. We will see a variety of water birds, raptors, and who knows what in migration. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. E-mail: Rlewis0727@aol.com.

## **SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

## **MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6, COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO WALK.**

We'll bird ocean's edge and inland treetops. We will carpool to several locations. We should find resident birds and fall migrants.

## Field Trips Reports

**P**oint Reyes 11th annual all-day blitz, April 17th, Leon Abrams and Cathy Purchis. 15 participants and 94 species – on the low side for this trip, which covers the varied habitats of Point Reyes Nat. Seashore. **Mines Road**, April 24th. A great GGAS trip for many years, this year being no exception. Leader George Bing reports 69 species and a manageable 25–30 people in 11 cars. Target birds seen included Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Greater Roadrunner, Lewis' Woodpecker, Canyon Wren and Golden Eagle (including eaglet). The only target birds missed were Rock Wren and Lawrence's Goldfinch, both seen by the leader on a trial run. Also seen were a Western Screech Owl, 5 young Great Horned Owls, 6 Wood Ducks and a Common Merganser. **Morongo Valley/Palm Canyon**, April 30–May 2, Scaf, Fujii and Hayashi. 20 participants had a great trip, seeing most of the target species and close views of tired migrating warblers at Palm Canyon. Highlights included Lucy's Warbler at Joshua Tree Nat. Park, Summer Tanager, Vermilion Flycatcher and many migrating empidonax flycatchers at Big Morongo Valley Preserve. **Sunol Regional Preserve**, May 1, Gloria Markowitz. Sunol is know for its raptors, although few were seen this year. 12 participants and 46 species, including a Green Heron. **Strybing Arboretum**, May 2nd, Ridley and McKenna. 15 participants growing to 20 after it stopped raining, including enthusiastic beginners. 30 species including 4 adult and 1 young Red-shouldered Hawk. **Wildcat Canyon Regional Park**, May 2nd, Malcolm Sproul. The trip specialty Grasshopper Sparrow was missed this year, but there were still 54 species, including Lark Sparrow and Wrentit, on a cold and windy day. 9 participants. **Briones Regional Park**, May 12, Wilcox and Spoelman. A warm sunny day, with 12 participants seeing or hearing 32 species, including 3 Acorn Woodpeckers, 2 young Red-tailed Hawks on a nest, and Chipping Sparrow. Individual numbers were low, as appears to be the case in most of the East Bay. }

Birds seen on recent trips include: Wandering Tattler, both Turnstones, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Sooty Shearwaters, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, Acorn Woodpecker (an SF rarity), four species of flycatchers and SF's only known Steller's Jays. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot on Merrie Way (a stub street off the north end of the Great Highway) in San Francisco. Fog and wind always possible. We'll finish at noon. Beginners welcome. **Please make reservations.** Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229. E-mail: harry\_fuller@zd.com

### WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 8, MINI-TRIP TO ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

Anna Wilcox (510)-351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman of Ohlone Audubon have kindly agreed to another season of their wonderful "mini-trips" to 10 important East Bay birding locations. For this first trip of the season, meet at 9:30 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Drive. We will be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. This trip often produces Clapper Rail and a dozen or more species of shorebirds. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one.

### SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 11, COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO.

Meet at 8:a.m. in the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, at Lake Merced, and in Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of warblers, flycatchers and vagrants. Bring lunch and be prepared for cold weather

near the coast. Beginners welcome. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074.

### SEPTEMBER 26–OCTOBER 1, SERVICE TRIP TO RAMSEY CANYON.

This birding gem, a Nature Conservancy Preserve located in the Huachuca Mountains in southeast Arizona, is undergoing major renovation and needs volunteers to assist in a variety of projects. There will be 3 days of work interspersed with 5 days of hiking and birding with staff naturalists and docents. Jeffrey Black is leading this service trip, and asks

GGAS members interested to call him (510-526-7068) for more information and reservations. Trip price is \$595 and includes all meals. Some lodging is available for NO additional charge, otherwise, the group will be car camping. }

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (\*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an (\*), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



## Those Amazing Flickers

As with anything or anyone you love, they (or it) can become a pest from time to time. So it is that when people find out I'm into birds, they often spew out some complaint. There's the common problem during courtship of the male bird which falls in love with its own reflection, often your large plate glass window or your car's hubcaps. He is actually fighting himself as he perceives his reflection as a rival for his fair maiden's attention. He can be deterred by making a reflection impossible—with soap or a sheet of newspaper properly placed in a window.

Another common problem in springtime is the flicker woodpecker's desire to drill his nesting hole into your stucco home, usually under the eaves. Flickers are handsome, large birds who are being displaced by the evil foreign birds, the European starlings. The latter were brought to our country by some homesick Englishman who thought it would be great to bring all the birds mentioned in Shakespeare to his new country. We all know the consequences of these types of emotional decisions. Environmental disasters abound from such thinking. Not only flickers but many other cavity-nesting birds such as swallows, bluebirds, kestrels, and owls are vying for similar housing.

If you think your flicker is annoying as he ruins your home's exterior, how about the chaps at Kennedy Space Center in Florida? They were set to launch the space shuttle Discovery in June 1995

when it was discovered that a Yellow-shafted Flicker had found the nice, soft, rust-brown insulation covering the shuttle's main fuel tank! Many unique attempts to budge the flickers had been tried: plastic owls, balloons with large eyes painted on them, plastic streamers fluttering in the wind. Tapes of flicker distress calls were played over loud speakers, high-pressure hoses were on hand and trappers searched for the birds who were not to be found.

Apparently, the birds found the insulation material the right color and texture, but it was only 6" deep so they kept drilling more holes, looking for a thicker area to become home. The scare tactics worked for awhile but birds become accustomed to such devices and soon realize they aren't a threat.

An "expert" Jerome Jackson, was brought in and his suggestions were logical. The area was great flicker habitat (old utility poles, mowed fields to prevent fires near the launch site, probably lots of ants, flickers' preferred food). However, there were lots of starlings around too, competing for nest sites. One idea was to encourage Barn or Great-horned Owls to return to the area as their presence would ward off other birds which consider owls a menace. Close to the launch pad, they could place nest-box traps. These are birdhouses with a door that closes when a bird enters. The door is painted bright orange so you know when a bird is trapped. The birds can be banded for

future identification and then re-located elsewhere.

If we know a species well, we can ferret out the reasons for their behavior. Unlike other woodpecker species, the flicker's bill is long and curved. While it's a great tool for probing the ground, it is not good for excavating sound wood. So flickers seek soft or rotting wood—or nice, spongy insulation material, or your soft stucco. It's likely the space behind your stucco will not suit the flicker's needs. The bad news is that he may just keep on trying! Spraying him with a hose will deter him, but consider placing a nest box somewhere near by. Make sure the nest box is 1 to 2 feet deep and 6 to 7 inches square. Use heavy, untreated, rough-hewn lumber with extra rough walls inside for climbing. Score the outside of the oval entrance of the box which is a 3" high and 2" wide hole. Situate the box at least 6 feet high with some sort of predator guard on the pole. Finally, fill the box to the entrance with sawdust or tightly packed wood chips or shavings. Since flickers like to excavate, the shavings are an apparent psychological ploy!

Flickers lay large clutches of 4 to 9 eggs, continuing to lay eggs until it "feels" right. By removing one poor bird's eggs, she was made to lay 71 eggs!

A while back, the Red-shafted (most common in our area), the Yellow-shafted (common in the east) and the Gilded (the desert southwest) were lumped together as the Common Flicker, soon

changed to Northern Flicker. Because the three hybridize in the areas where their ranges overlap, they are considered a single species but we still refer to them by their old names to identify the subspecies.

The adult males sport mustaches: Yellow-shafted have black mustaches while Red-shafted and Gilded have red ones. The hybrids are mottled. A classic experiment in the '30's proved by painting mustaches on females that the mustaches are a sex signal.

As mentioned, flickers adore ants. So they are often seen on the ground, an unlikely spot for a woodpecker. Their tongues are extremely long and their large salivary glands allow their sticky tongues to gather dozens of ants with each flick. They also feast on a variety of other insects, fruits and berries, suet and peanut butter treats at feeders, plus a few seeds. Like other woodpeckers, they bring food to their young. However, instead of offering one morsel at a time, they regurgitate their food to their young. Transporting insects one at a time would be a full-time job!

When we do our Christmas count, I'm thankful it is the time of year they call frequently. Along with their familiar "wick-er, wick-er, wick-er," I know fall is here when I hear that familiar one note, "Cheer!" }

## Arrowhead Marsh Awaits You ... Become a Census Taker Now!

**G**olden Eagles, Ospreys, Black-bellied Plovers, Gadwalls, etc. These are all on view at Arrowhead Marsh and they are but a few of the myriad species of birds you can document as a volunteer census taker during our 1999-2000 bird count.

You would be part of a 5-year study that started last October, went through April, and will begin again in August. We have had 28 marvelous volunteers working on this project and many of them will continue into the next season. They go out once a month for 2 hours and they work on teams of 2 or more. Some of our volunteers have loved the opportunity to visit Arrowhead so much that they have offered to do more than one shift a month.

This project is the result of GGAS along with other groups winning a lawsuit against the Port of Oakland, which resulted in the Port turning back into wetlands 80 acres adjacent to Arrowhead. Our mission is to do a census of birds on the regular marsh and of birds on the newly reclaimed wetland. A scientist will tabulate these counts once the agreement between the Port and GGAS is signed which will be done by the end of June.

I would like to thank the following census takers who have worked so hard during the last year and I hope to see most of them again: **Kathryn Blake, Kay Bloom, Andree Breaux, Howard Brownson, Tim Cleere, Connie Diernisse, Judith Dunham, Sue Gallegher, Pete Goldman, Susan Hampton, Cathy Hubbard, Danne Jones, Caroline Kim, Kirk Korayama, Scott Lambert, Collin Murphy, Marilyn Nasitir, Leah Norwood, Susan Pagani, Nancy Page, Courtney Peddle, Julie Roemer, Mary Schaefer, Elizabeth Sojourner, Phoebe Tanner, Gwen Thoele, Carol Thorpe and Ed Walker.**

You do not have to be an experienced bird-watcher to join the group; we will team you up with someone with more experience and we will have some training sessions before we begin.

Simply call the GGAS office at 510 843-2222 by August 1, 1999, and tell them you'd like to join us for the 1999-2000 season, August through April. If you have any questions you can call me at home, 510-549-0411. **Carolyn Kolka** }



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## Audubon's Friends, Part II

Harry Fuller

This is a continuation of short biographies of men whose names are remembered in part because they were associated with John James Audubon, and he chose to commemorate them. Part I appeared in the *May Gull*.

### Edward Harris (1799–1863)

Son of a wealthy farmer and exporter, Edward Harris grew up near Philadelphia. He had money, a deep interest in nature, and a generous spirit—a perfect match for John Audubon.

Audubon and Harris met in 1824. Harris immediately became an admirer and supporter of Audubon's art and publication plans. Harris bought many paintings from his friend and even insisted that Audubon accept sizable gifts of money.

They became close friends. Harris went on two of Audubon's major expeditions: the 1837 trip along the Gulf of Mexico, and the 1843 trip up the Missouri River to the Yellowstone River. When they were apart, the two men kept up a lively correspondence.

On the Missouri River trip, Harris shot a specimen of his namesake sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*). Nuttall and Townsend had first found the sparrow nine years earlier, and Nuttall had published a scientific description. Typically, Audubon was oblivious to Nuttall's work. He gave the little sparrow different Latin and common names. The common name,

Harris' Sparrow stuck.

The species itself was long an elusive nester, and it took nearly 100 years before the first Harris' Sparrow nest and eggs were found in the stunted forests south of Churchill, Manitoba, by George Sutton, Olin Pettingill, and other American ornithologists.

Harris outlived his friend and loyally continued to send money to the widowed Lucy Audubon.

### John Henslow (1796–1861)

The Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*) is even more elusive than Harris' Sparrow. Harris' is uncommon in the winter in California. Henslow's Sparrow may be unknown in this state and is hard to find even on its breeding territory in the East.

Reverend John Henslow was at one time one of the best-known scientists in England. After giving up the ministry, he spent many years teaching botany at Cambridge. He and Audubon met in England in 1828, and Henslow became a friendly supporter of Audubon's effort to find subscribers to his birds folio.

Henslow made a much more important contribution to science than befriending Audubon. He recommended his former student, Charles Darwin, as the naturalist on the voyage of the "Beagle." Decades later, Henslow presided over the first open debate over Darwin's evolutionary theory before the Royal Society.

### Thomas Lincoln (1812–1883)

The Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*) is a regular winter bird in the Bay Area. Many people imagine it was named in honor of President Abraham Lincoln. In fact, Audubon named the bird, in 1834, in honor of his younger friend, Thomas Lincoln of Dennysville, Maine. Audubon had met young Lincoln before his trip to Labrador in 1833 and thought him a natural crew member. He proven to be correct, as Lincoln was hard-working and brave.

The group reached northern Nova Scotia in late June, and there Audubon heard a bird song he did not recognize. He called for his companions, and it was Thomas Lincoln who first located and shot the little songster. It was a new bird that Audubon originally called "Tom's Finch." It would be the only new species Audubon found on that trip.

Lincoln returned to Maine where he became a successful farmer, taciturn neighbor, and staunch abolitionist. In his later years, Lincoln recalled Audubon as "a nice man, but as Frenchy as thunder." Another member of the Labrador expedition was William Ingalls, and his own recollection of Lincoln was "quiet, reserved, sensible, practical, and reliable."

### Isaac Sprague (1811–1895)

Isaac Sprague first met Audubon when the older man admired Sprague's bird drawings

in 1840. Sprague was invited to join Audubon's expedition up the Missouri River in 1843. On that trip, near the mouth of the Yellowstone River Edward Harris and John Bell shot a small brown bird. Audubon realized it was a new species and named it "Sprague's Missouri Lark," but we know it as Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*). Sprague himself laid down his drawing tools a few days later and found his namesake's nest and eggs in a mound of prairie grass.

Some of Sprague's fine drawings were incorporated into Audubon's later publications, without credit. However, Sprague soon became America's best-known botanical illustrator of his day. He was chosen to illustrate Asa Gray's classic, *Botanical Textbook*, and then his subsequent *Flora*.

Sprague also knew and worked with Dr John Torrey (whose name graces the pine tree) and ornithologist Henry Henshaw, the man who first described and named Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*). Sprague continued to produce illustrations and paintings for himself and friends until his death.

### William Swainson (1789-1855)

The Englishman, William Swainson, was a talented, industrious, and strong-willed naturalist and artist. He was self-trained but meticulous. In his later years, he became highly critical of Audubon's slipshod scientific descriptions.

In the 1830s, however, Audubon and Swainson were friends and traveled to Paris together, seeking supporters for their publications and drawings. Even before meeting Audubon, Swainson was well-versed in American ornithology. He had traveled to Brazil and collected birds there a decade earlier. He also had access to Mexican birds collected by the Bullock family. Swainson himself first described a number of New World species based on Bullock's specimens. Among California birds Swainson first described and named are Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Canyon Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*), Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*), Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullocki*), American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*), Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*), and Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*).

Swainson illustrated a prodigious number of scientific and popular works on nature. His bird drawings are as exciting and realistic as any of Audubon's.

Professing disgust with England, Swainson moved with his family to New Zealand in 1840 and never returned to England, although he spent considerable time in Australia. His final home was near Wellington.

Audubon commemorated Swainson by naming a warbler (*Linnothlypis swainsonii*) after him, a warbler given to Audubon by Rev. John Bachman. Later Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) and Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) were given his name as well.

## Donations

**Peregrine Falcon**  
(\$500 or more):  
Tom Heffelfinger

**Least Tern** (\$200 or more):  
Daisy Uyeda

**Clapper Rail**  
(\$100 or more):  
C. Foster

**Gifts** (under \$100):  
J. Michael Hatch, Mildred & Fred & Mildred Twining, Albert Hoffman, Patricia Melvin, Thomas Csicsman, Johan Langewis, Margot Parke

**In Honor of** Meg Pauletich:  
Nancy Conzett

For the Alameda Wildlife Refuge: The Berkeley Garden Club

**In Memoriam:**  
The following donations were made in memory of **Tim Brauch:**  
Rosemary & David Steenhausen, Jackie & Kevin Cameron, Jodie Blum, Miriam Flores, Melrose and Duane Kirschbaum, The Dennis Hickey Family, , Janette, Berger/Lewis Accountancy Corporation, Lynne & David Madison, Betsy & Moe Whitaker.

In memory of **Beth Snyder:**  
Jane Dang and Nancy Conzett

The Society Welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in The Gull, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

# Nominations to the GGAS Board of Directors

The GGAS Board of Directors is pleased to present to you its nominations to the GGAS Board of Directors for 1999/00. Please fill out the ballot below and send it to the GGAS Office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94792.

BALLOT	TERM	CANDIDATE	YES	NO
First Vice President	2-Year			
Officers				
Recording Secretary	1-Year	Leslie Lethridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding Secretary	1-Year	Pat Gannon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treasurer	1-Year	Ann Howard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directors	3-Year	Allan Ridley	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3-Year	Leora Feeney	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Fall 1999 Birding Classes

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon Society will be starting September 7, 8, and 16, 1999. All classes meet 7-9:15 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area* and *Birds of Northern California*. He is also coordinator of the recorded "Northern California Birdbox" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is *A Field Guide to Birds of North America*, third edition, by the National Geographic Society.

**Field Ornithology I** meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution and behavior. Part A (EA101) starts September 7 and ends October 19; Part B (EA105) starts October 26 and ends December 7.

**Field Ornithology II** meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American water birds, including waders and waterfowl. Part A (EA110) starts September 8 and ends October 20; Part B (EA115) starts October 27 and ends December 15.

**Field Ornithology III** meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of North American land

birds including shrikes, vireos, chickadees, creepers, nuthatches, wrens and thrushes. Part A (EA120) starts September 16 and ends October 21; Part B (EA125) starts October 28 and ends December 16.

The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them. Fees are \$100 for each seven-week course (\$85 for Ornithology III which has six-week sessions). Pre-registration is strongly advised. For further information call (415) 561-1860. You can also obtain a registration form at Joe Morlan's California Birding Pages on the Internet: <http://fog.ccsf.cc.us/~jmorlan/>.



## September Meeting

There are no monthly meetings in July and August. Our next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be on Thursday, September 16, 1999, at the Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley. Check the GGAS web site for details in late July at <http://goldengate.ca.audubon.org>.

## A Thank You to Marisol Quintana

by Dana Kokubun

GGAS wishes to thank Marisol Quintana, a friend of Audubon who has designed many print pieces for us, most recently our Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge brochure. The FAWR brochure has been distributed widely in Alameda to the general public and to schools. Ms. Quintana is a computer savvy graphic designer with nearly 15 years experience, but you might also catch her out in the field teaching beginning bird watching classes. Marisol has just opened her own design business, Quintana & Associates Creative Services and would welcome work from fellow Audubon members. Please call her for your print and web design needs (510) 548-6916, e-mail at [lascucas@sirius.com](mailto:lascucas@sirius.com), and check out her website at [www.sirius.com/~lascucas](http://www.sirius.com/~lascucas). She states "the aim of my business is to create unique, on-time and fairly priced design for small business and corporate clients".

## GGAS Petitions National Audubon to Restore Funding for Critical Environmental Programs

The Golden Gate Audubon Society has just learned that the National Audubon's proposed budget for 2000 has completely eliminated the Endangered Species Campaign (about \$100,000), and the Wetlands Campaign budget has been reduced almost by half (by about \$150,000). Furthermore, the position of Vice-President for Campaigns has just been eliminated.

This does not present a comforting picture for the future of Audubon as a conservation advocacy organization. In response to this news the Golden Gate Audubon Society unanimously adopted the following resolution at its meeting on May 24, 1999 and has subsequently notified John Flicker and the National Audubon Board. It is our understanding that this budget proposal has not yet been adopted and there may yet be time to reverse this misguided abandonment of conservation efforts. The resolutions reads as follows:

**Whereas** the Golden Gate Audubon Society recognizes that our national environmental laws are the bedrock of conservation activity;

**Whereas**, the Audubon grassroots has made it clear that wetlands and endangered species are among the most critical conservation issues, and the National Audubon Board has adopted them as priority campaigns;

**Whereas**, Chapters rely on National Audubon Society to provide for conservation advocacy on a national level;

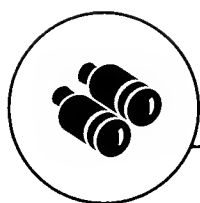
**Whereas**, National Audubon has established a policy of implementing conservation advocacy through its campaigns;

**Whereas**, National Audubon has proposed eliminating all funding for its Endangered Species Campaign and has reduced the funding for its Wetlands Campaign by nearly 1/2;

**Whereas**, National Audubon has eliminated the position of Vice-President for Campaigns.

**Therefore**, be it resolved that the Golden Gate Audubon Society requests that the National Audubon Society restore full funding for both the Endangered Species Campaign and the Wetlands Campaign and restore the position of Vice-President for Campaigns.

**Therefore**, be it further resolved that the Golden Gate Audubon Society requests that the National Audubon Society reassure its chapters that conservation advocacy on a national level remains one of the organization's highest priorities and will receive funding commensurate with that importance.



April 26 - May 26 1999

The month of May began with additional rain on the coast and almost a foot of snow in the Sierras on May 2! Toward the end of the period, a more normal weather pattern prevailed, although enough cool weather occurred to keep the coastal hills carpeted in green for a few more days. Observers reported a delayed breeding season for many bird species.

### Loons to Storm Petrels.

An alternate-plumaged **Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*) flew by Pigeon Point, SM, May 9 (BS fide RT). One or two Laysan Albatross were spotted on a pelagic trip out of Ft. Bragg, MEN, May 23 (DT). Black-footed Albatross were observed in abundance during the period, with hundreds recorded during the BSOL Marathon, MTY, on May 1 (MPRBA), over 100 seen from a pelagic trip off Ft. Bragg, MEN, May 23 (DT), as well as reports from several other locations in HUM and SM counties (MOB). Two reports of **Short-tailed Albatross** (*Phoebastria albatrus*) came from MTY county, with one off Pebble Beach, May 1 (MPRBA fide JB), and another only 400 yds. off Pt. Pinos, May 9-10 (TL). A new summary of information regarding identification problems for this species is now available on Don Roberson's website: <http://montereybay.com/creagrus/dark>

[alb\\_id.html](http://alb_id.html).

A Murphy's Petrel was recorded near the near the lighthouse, PRNS, MRN, May 8 (RS). This species is a resident of the Central S. Pacific Ocean, and although an irregular visitor to offshore waters, is rarely seen close to shore. High count for Pink-footed Shearwaters was 46 on an Apr. 24 Cordell Banks pelagic trip (DN), while 12 were off Pigeon Pt., SM, May 9 (BS fide RT), 9 on a May 15 MTY Bay pelagic trip (DLSh), and a few others were seen May 23 off Ft. Bragg, MEN (DT). One of the great bird spectacles of the period was the passage of 3000-10,000 Sooty Shearwaters *per hour* off Pt. Pinos, MTY May 9 (TL). A Short-tailed Shearwater was noted off Pebble Beach, MTY, May 1 (MPRBA). There were two reports of **Manx Shearwaters** (*Puffinus puffinus*), one seen off Pt. Pinos, MTY, on a May 15 MTY Bay pelagic trip (DLSh), and another off Pigeon Pt., SM, May 21 (RT). Two Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels were spotted on Apr. 24 pelagic trip to the Cordell Banks (DN), 6 were found off Pt. Pinos, MTY, May 1 (TL, GE), others were reported from the BSOL Marathon, MTY, on Mar. 1 (MPRBA), and 5 dead birds of this species were found between Kehoe Beach and Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Apr. 30 (LH). Another Fork-tailed Storm Petrel flew past the Cliff House, SF, May 1 (HC). An early Ashy Storm-Petrel was seen on the May 15 MTY Bay pelagic trip (DLSh).

### Hérons to Ducks.

Reported too late for the last column was an adult Little Blue Heron seen near Marble Hot Springs Road & Dyson Lane, PLU, Apr. 26 (JL). Another Little Blue Heron was found May 5 near Bay Point, Suisun Bay, CC (SR), a possible county record. A **Tricolored Heron** (*Egretta tricolor*) was discovered at Pt. Sur, MTY, May 24 and remained until May 29, potentially a first MTY county and only the 4<sup>th</sup> Northern CA record (SB). This heron normally resides on the Southeastern U.S. coast and on both coasts of Mexico. Six White-faced Ibis were at an unusual coastal location at Coyote Hills Regional Park, ALA, May 1 (BSc), and a second coastal report was of a single bird at Tyee City, HUM, May 23 (I). Encouraging news for the nest box program was the sight of a Wood Duck with 10 ducklings near Olema Marsh,

PRNS, MRN May 2 (LL). One lingering Eurasian Wigeon was in Kirby Park, MTY, May 1 (MRPBA). A Harlequin Duck remained at Monterey Harbor, MTY, May 1 (MRBPA), some were seen at Virgin Creek Beach, MEN (JW) May 1, and another individual was at the Feather R., HUM, May 16 (D). Oldsquaws stayed in the area as well, with 12 seen over ALA, HUM, MRN, MTY, SF, SM, and SON counties. One female Hooded Merganser remained at the UC Davis Arboretum, YOL, May 7 (GH).

### Raptors to Gulls.

Twelve Swainson's Hawks roosting along Majestic Oak Trail, STA, May 15 (PG) must have been an impressive sight. During the first two weeks of the period, a Golden Eagle was again seen a few times at Arrowhead Marsh, ALA, (CP). Golden Eagle activity was first noted there in March as reported earlier. There were six American Golden-Plovers at the Spaletta Plateau, PRNS, MRN, Apr. 27 (BSO) and one in alternate plumage was reported from the same location May 25 (RS). Single Pacific Golden-Plovers were at Lawson's Landing, MRN, Apr. 28 (RS), and at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, May 3 (MPRBA), and an alternate-plumaged individual at Spaletta Plateau, PRNS, MTN, May 15 (BSO). In addition, three of this species were near the Pigeon Point lighthouse, SM, May 2 (PM), and up to two were at Pigeon Pt., SM, May 10-14 (BS fide RT).

Unusual within the Bay was a Black Oystercatcher on Brooks Island, CC, May 9 (MS). Twelve Solitary Sandpipers were seen over GLE, HUM, SM, SCL, and TRI counties, and a single Semipalmated Sandpiper was near the Napa Slough Bridge, NAP, May 9 (JLu). High count for Red-necked Phalaropes was 13,200 off Pigeon Pt., SM, May 9 (BS fide RT), and for Red Phalaropes the highest number was 234 off Pigeon Pt., SM, May 9 (BS fide RT). An adult Laughing Gull flew past Pt. Pinos, MTY, May 1 (TL, GE). Sixteen Franklin's Gulls were spotted in SM county during the period, and at least 4 others were seen in MRN, MTY, SJ, and SON counties.

Two **Little Gulls** (*Larus minutus*) remained at the Stockton Sewage Ponds, SJ, until at least May 5 (GC, JD). Another **Little Gull**, a first winter bird and not the adult seen earlier in April at the same location, was at the

**Abbreviations for Observers:** SA, Steve Abbott; SB, Steve Bailey; FB, Florence Bennett; MB, Mary Betlock; GB, George Bing; JB, Jim Booker; MBo, Marj Bourret; GC, George Chaniot; LC, Les Chibana; HC, Hugh Cotter; SD, Stephen Davies; JD, Jason Davis; DD, Dave DeSante; D, Dimmick; GE, Graham Etherington; GEW, Gil Ewing; ME, Mike Feighner; RF, Robbie Fischer; JG, Jim Gain; SG, Steve Glover; PG, Phil Gordon; FG, Frank Gray; BG, Bill Grenfell; KH, Keith Hansen; CH, Cliff Hawley; KHi, Kevin Hints; GH, Glen Holstein; LH, Lisa Hug; I, Irvin; KK, Keith Kwan; LL, Leslie Lieurance; JL, Jim Lomax; CL, Calvin Lou; TL, Tom Lowe; JLu, John Luther; MOB, Many Observers; PM, Peter Metropulos; MM, Mike Moran; JM, Joe Morlan; DN, Dan Nelson; AO, Al Olivera; MP, Mike Parmeter; CP, Courtenay Peddle; JR, Jean Richmond; SR, Steve Rottenborn; SRO, Steve Rovell; BS, Barry Sauppe; BSc, Bill Scoggins; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; BSO, Bo Soderstrom; RS, Rich Stallcup; JS, John Sterling; SS, Sandra Steurer-Bessler; MS, Mary Beth Stowe; ES, Emilie Strauss; KS, Kirk Swenson; ST, Scott Terrill; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; JT, John Trochet; JW, Jerry White; DW, Denise Wight

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory; CC, Contra Costa; ED, El Dorado; FRE, Fresno; GLE, Glenn; HUM, Humboldt; KIN, Kings; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; MTY, Monterey; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; PLA, Placer; PLU, Plumas; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SAC, Sacramento; SBI, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SHA, Shasta; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; TRI, Trinity; YOL, Yolo

Alviso Water Pollution Control Plant, SCL, Apr. 28. Yet another first winter **Little Gull** was observed off Pigeon Pt., SM, May 21 (RT). Two pairs of Heermann's Gulls were nesting on an island in Roberts Lake, MTY, May 18 (SB, MPRBA). Heermann's Gulls normally breed on islands in the Gulf of California, and there have apparently been no successful nests in the U.S. Additional information about this find is presented on another Roberson web-site : [http://montereybay.com/creagrus/MTY\\_rare.html](http://montereybay.com/creagrus/MTY_rare.html). Five Glaucous gulls were seen in HUM, MRN, MTY, and SM counties. Black-legged Kittiwakes close to shore were especially abundant during the period, with hundreds and even thousands over a period of hours being seen by observers in HUM, MEN, MRN, MTY, SE, SM, and SON counties. An early Elegant Tern was observed off Pigeon Pt., SM, May 9 (BS fide RT). Thirty-seven Common Terns turned up off Pigeon Point, SM, May 16 (RT), and two others were off Duxbury Reef, MRN, May 19 (KH). The first two northbound Arctic Terns of the season were reported on the Apr. 26 Cordell Banks pelagic trip (DN), two were seen from Pigeon Pt., SM, May 7 (BS fide RT), and in late April one returned to Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, for the 7<sup>th</sup> summer (KH, CL, ES). Single Black Skimmers were seen in MTY Harbor, MTY, Apr. 30 (MPRBA), and at Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 19-23 (MB, ES).

### Nighthawks to Flycatchers.

The first Lesser Nighthawk since 1925 at Big Sur, MTY, and potentially a second record for the location, was observed May 22 (MPRBA). Eight Black Swifts flying over Coyote Point County Park, SM, May 18 (RT) were an uncommon occurrence near the bay. A Chimney Swift flocked with swallows and Vaux's Swifts at AMSP, MTY, May 22 (MPRBA). Black-chinned Hummingbirds were reported from four locations: one at AMSP, MTY, May 1 (TL, GE), another on Del Puerto Rd., STA, May 10 (LC), at least one at Piper Slough, CC, May 11 (JR), and a pair on the east levee of the Stanislaus R., STA, May 15 (PG). Costa's Hummingbirds were seen in their customary locale at Del Puerto Rd., STA, April. 27-May 13 (JR, LC, MOB), and two were sighted at BSOL, MTY, May 10 (MPRBA). Uncommon for Tilden Regional Park,

CC, was a Pileated Woodpecker near L. Anza, May 5 (MF).

There were several noteworthy *Eupidoux* reports this month. A Least Flycatcher was observed at the PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse trees May 22 (DD). Five single Hammond's Flycatchers were seen over CC, HUM, MTY, and SCL counties. A Gray Flycatcher was banded at BSOL, MTY, May 3 (MPRBA), and 3 individuals were there May 10 (MPRBA). Yet another Gray Flycatcher was at the Sacramento NWR, GLE, May 19 (SG). Single Dusky Flycatchers were reported from CC, SM and SCL counties. A Red-eyed Vireo put in an appearance at PRNS, MRN, May 25 (RS).

### Thrushes to Orioles.

One of the best landbirds for the period was a **Veery** (*Catharus fuscescens*) at Consumnes River Preserve, SAC, May 2 (JT). This thrush, of the northeastern and upper midwestern U.S. and Southern Canada, is an extremely rare transient, with most records in the fall, not spring (Small, 1994). An uncommon coastal location for a Sage Thrasher was at the Yacht Club at Coyote Pt. County Park, SM, May 7 (RT). A single, late Bohemian Waxwing was with 300 Cedar Waxwings at Coyote Pt. Co. Park, SM, May 7 (RT). Three male Phainopeplas arrived at an unusual coastal location at Carquinez Scenic Drive, CC, near Martinez on May 5 (DW). Reports of uncommon Wood Warblers were on the upswing this month (see chart).

Belmont, SM, hosted a Clay-colored Sparrow May 25 (RT). Black-chinned Sparrows were reported from two locations, with 2-8 at Mosquito Ridge Rd., PLA, May 18-25 (SA, CH, BG), and 5 others in Mt. Diablo State Park, CC, May 23 (SD). A Vesper Sparrow was seen near Hwy. 1, Half Moon Bay, SM, May 4 (RT). One Black-throated Sparrow was near Icehouse & Granite Springs Rd., ED, May 25 (FB), two were near Mosquito Ridge Rd., PLA, May 24 (BG), and another was at Westport Union Landing State Beach, MEN, May 24-25 (KS). Lark Buntings were found in MTY, PLA, SAC, SBT, and STA counties, with high counts of 10 in the Panoche Valley April 29, SBT, (DLSH) and 17 Near Knights Ferry, STA, May 7 (JG). At least 14 White-throated Sparrows were distributed over ALA, CC, HUM, MTY, MRN, and MEN counties. Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were at the Phipps

## Wood Warbler Sightings

<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>			
May 23	Pescadero, SM		RT
<b>Nashville Warbler</b>			
May 2,	Mather Lake, SAC	SS, FG	
May 13			
May 5	Mt. Diablo State Park, CC	MF	
May 17	Mt. Diablo State Park, CC	JM, RF	
<b>Virginia's Warbler</b>			
May 17	AMSP, MTY	SRO, MRPBA	
May 18			
<b>Northern Parula</b>			
May 13	AMSP, MTY	MPRBA	
May 24	Muddy Hollow, PRBO, MRN	MP fide RS	
May 24	Lagunitas Creek, MRN	RS	
<b>Palm Warbler</b>			
May 17	McKinleyville, HUM	1	
<b>Blackpoll Warbler</b>			
May 22	Lighthouse trees, PRNS, MRN	DD	
<b>Black-and-white Warbler</b>			
May 10	BSOL, MTY	MPRBA	
May 16	BSOL, MTY (banded)	MPRBA	
May 26	Owl Canyon, Bodega, SON	DN	
<b>Hooded Warbler</b>			
May 25	PRNS, MRN	RS	

Ranch, SM, May 1 (RT) and at PRNS, MRN, May 25 (RS). Thirteen or more Blue Grosbeak sightings occurred over ALA, CC, MTY, SBT, SJ, SCL, and STA counties. A breeding-plumaged male Dickcissel was seen on Mines Rd., ALA, May 12,13 (MBo, MF). This species of the midwestern fields and prairies is in serious decline, and is a very rare coastal transient in CA (Small, 1994).

Grackles continue to encroach upon Northern California. Single **Common Grackles** (*Quiscalus quiscula*) were reported from two locations: one at the Ironhouse Sanitary District in Oakley, CC, Apr. 28 (MM) and the other at at Lakehead, SHA, May 14 (fide JB). Three male Great-tailed Grackles were at Baldwin Dam Reservoir, PLA, May 1 (GEw) and there was a female at Mendota Wildlife Refuge, FRE, May 4 (John Sterling). In addition, a number of them were reported from KIN county on May 2 (JS). The male and 5 females found nesting at Roberts Lake, MTY, May 10-19 are a first county nesting record (MPRBA). Not to be outdone, another pair was apparently nesting at Shady Cliffs RP, ALA, May 9-22 (AO fide GB, MOB). The latter report may also be a first county nesting record. Yet two more of this species were seen in Elk Grove, SAC, May 24 (KK). Having recently spent a week in Mexico where Great-tailed Grackles were courting and nesting only a few feet away, this observer can testify to their extremely raucous vocalizations and exuberant wing-flappings. Will they be considered a nuisance in Northern California if they establish a large population here? The last sighting to report is that of an Orchard Oriole near the Big Sur campground, MTY, May 24 (MRPBA).

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As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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